



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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WARS, 1939-45, ACCOUNT OF PART PLAYED BY AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES AND CHRONOLOGY

§ 1. MILITARY DEFENCE

1. State Systems

A detailed historical account of the Australian defence forces prior to Federation will be found in Official Year Book No. 2, (1901-1918) pp. 1075-1080. See also Official Year Book No. 12, (1901-1918) p. 999.

The strength of the military forces of the States on 31st December, 1900 (the eve of Federation) was: New South Wales, 9,338; Victoria, 6,335; Queensland, 4,028; South Australia, 2,932; Western Australia, 2,696; Tasmania, 2,024; total for Australia 27,353. This total was exclusive of cadets, reservists and rifle club members.

2. Commonwealth System

(i) **General.** Under the terms of the Constitution Act 1900, the Commonwealth took over control of defence matters in March, 1901. The growth of the Commonwealth Military Forces may be considered to have taken place in fifteen phases, namely:

(a) The first phase, i.e., the welding together of the military forces of the States into one homogeneous army, was entrusted by the Government in 1902 to Major-General Sir Edward Hutton, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., and a sound foundation was laid, upon which the subsequent organization and training were based.

(b) The second phase was the introduction of Universal Training in 1911. During 1909 a measure providing for universal training was enacted, and the scheme came into force in 1911 after the advice and recommendations of Lord Kitchener had been obtained. By the Defence Acts of 1903 and 1904 all male inhabitants between the ages of 18 and 60 years were made liable to serve in Australia with the defence forces **in the of war**. Subsequent legislation made training and service compulsory up to the age of 26 years **in time of peace**. By the Act of 1909 the principle of universal liability to training was made law for the first time in any English-speaking community. More detailed reference to these matters will be found in Official Year Book No. 12, p. 999 **et seq.**

(c) The third phase, Divisional Organization, came into operation from 1st May, 1921. Under this

system a war organization, evolved from the Australian Imperial Force, was applied to peace conditions, with a minimum of permanent personnel. Numbers of units and formations were altered to correspond with those of the A.I.F. and every effort was made to maintain the traditions established by those units in the 1914-19 War.

(d) The fourth phase, which was initiated by the Government in 1922, entailed the reduction of the Divisional Organization to a nucleus force.

(e) The fifth phase, the suspension of all compulsory obligations **in time of peace** (under Part XII. of the Defence Act) and the reconstitution of the forces on a basis of voluntary enlistment, was brought into operation as from 1st November, 1929. The Divisional Organization was retained, but the peace nucleus was reduced from 48,000 Citizen Forces and 16,000 Senior Cadets to 35,000 Militia Forces and 7,000 Senior Cadets, by reductions in the training establishments of units and by ceasing to maintain certain light horse regiments and infantry battalions. The peace nucleus of the Militia Forces was further reduced to 30,000 in 1931.

(f) The sixth phase was initiated by the Government in July, 1936, whereby authority was given to raise the training strength of the Militia to 35,000, maintaining the Senior Cadets at 7,000. This strength was attained by December, 1936. The Divisional Organization was retained. Certain light horse regiments and infantry battalions which ceased to be maintained in the fifth phase, and were linked with other light horse regiments and battalions, were now resuscitated. In addition certain new units were organized as a first step towards the modernization of the field army and coast defence. These units included light horse machine gun regiments and anti-aircraft and searchlight units.

(g) The seventh phase was initiated by the Government in November, 1938, when authority was given to raise the training strength of the militia to 70,000. This strength was attained in March, 1939. The Divisional Organization was retained, and in order to absorb the increasing numbers the policy of increasing unit establishments was adopted, but new units were formed in a few special cases only.

(h) The eighth phase was initiated by the Government on 2nd September, 1939, when the Governor-General issued a proclamation of the existence of war or of a danger thereof and for the calling out of the Citizen Forces for war service.

(i) The ninth phase was initiated by the Government on 13th October, 1939, when the organization of the Australian Military Forces into Commands came into operation. The objects of the Command Organization are as follows:

(a) to bring peace organization into line with war organization;

(b) to provide for the personal and whole-time guidance and supervision, by a higher commander, of divisional and other formation commanders, on questions of training and general preparedness for war;

(c) to reduce the number of lower formations under the direct control of Army Headquarters.

(j) The tenth phase was initiated by the Government on 30th November, 1939, when a proclamation was issued under the Defence Act calling upon certain personnel to enlist and serve in the Defence Forces.

(k) The eleventh phase: Owing to a considerable expansion in the administrative functions which the three main commands were called upon to perform, it was decided to relieve the G.Os.C. of

these commands and their staffs of much of their administrative responsibilities in order that they might concentrate on operational matters. In January, 1942, therefore, Northern, Eastern and Southern Commands were divided into separate command and base head-quarters - the command head-quarters to handle operational and base head-quarters administrative matters.

(l) The twelfth phase: As a result of the expansion in supply and other administrative installations in Australia, it was found necessary to revise the machinery for command administration of lines of communication areas and to decentralize control. A division into lines of communication areas was therefore made, and these areas corresponded with Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western Commands and 7th and 8th Military Districts. Command and general administrative control of the lines of communication areas were placed under the respective base head-quarters and 7th and 8th Military Districts and came directly under Army Head-quarters.

(m) The thirteenth phase: In August, 1941, War Cabinet approved of Lieutenant-General Sir Iven Mackay as G.O.C.-in-C. Home Forces commanding the forces in Northern, Eastern and Southern Commands. The G.O.C.-in-C. was made superior to the G.Os.C. Commands for the direction of operations, but subordinate to the Military Board, which remained the body advising the Minister for the Army, and through him, War Cabinet.

(n) The fourteenth phase: Shortly after the outbreak of war with, Japan, a number of units of the United States Forces were routed to Australia. Subsequently additional forces arrived. By agreement among the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia in April, 1942, General Douglas MacArthur was appointed Commander-in-Chief, South West Pacific Area. General Sir Thomas Blamey was assigned to the command of the Allied Land Forces in the South West Pacific Area by General Head-quarters, South West Pacific Area. With the appointment of General Sir Thomas Blamey as Commander-in-Chief Australian Military Forces, the Military Board ceased to function and Army Head-quarters became Allied Land Forces Head-quarters, Australia. As from 9th April, 1942, the system of commands and bases was abolished and replaced by the field army and lines of communication areas which were established in each of the six States on the mainland plus Northern Territory and New Guinea. Field formations were formed as follows:

First Australian Army	From Northern and Eastern Command
Second Australian Army	From Southern Command
III. Australian Corps	From Western Command
Northern Territory Force	From 7th Military District
New Guinea Force	From 8th Military District

In March, 1943, First and Second Armies took over from Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria lines of communication areas the command of all coast and static anti-aircraft artillery defences and training establishments. On 6th June, 1944 Western Command was re-established and took over the combined responsibilities of III. Australian Corps and Western Australia Line of Communication Area.

(o) The fifteenth phase: In March, 1946, the Military Board and the organization of commands and military districts (see (i)) was re-introduced.

(ii) Population of Military Age. Census, 1933. The following particulars show the numbers of males of military age in the population of Australia, as at the Census of 30th June, 1933. The total number of cadet age, between 12 and 18 years, was 371,000; at citizen soldier age, between 18 and 26 years, 482,000; and between 26 and 35 years, 472,000; making a total of 954,000 between the ages of 18 and 35, which is considered the best period for military service. It is estimated that 620,000 of the males between the ages of 18 and 35 were unmarried or

widowers without children, and 331,000 were married or widowers with children. In addition to the abovementioned, there were 972,000 males between the ages of 35 and 60 in Australia at the 1933 Census.

(iii) **Allotment of Units.** Under the Command Organization (**see** (i) **(i)** and **(o)** above) units are raised on a territorial basis, each State supplying its proportion of the personnel required for the fighting services.

COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Northern command		Eastern command		Southern command		Western command		7th Military District		Royal Military College		Army Schools of Instruction	
All formations and units in 1st Military District		All formations and units in 2nd Military District				All formations and units in 5th Military District							
5th Military District													
		All formations and units in 3rd Military District		All formations and units in 4th Military District		All formations and units in 6th Military District							

Military Districts conform generally to State or Territory areas, as follows: 1st Military District, Queensland; 2nd, New South Wales; 3rd, Victoria; 4th, South Australia; 5th, Western Australia; 6th, Tasmania; 7th, Northern Territory; 8th, New Guinea. Third Military District includes a considerable portion of Southern New South Wales, and 4th includes Broken Hill.

(iv) Strength of Military Forces

There was little alteration in the numbers serving in the Australian military forces from the institution of the Commonwealth to the year of the introduction of the compulsory training system. From 1913 to 1918, however, the annual increase was considerable. As a result of the International Conference which met at Washington on 11th November, 1921, it was decided to continue the universal training law, but its operation was restricted to the more populous centres and to certain quotas only. From 1st July, 1922 to 30th June, 1925, training in the Senior Cadets was limited to two quotas instead of four, and in the Citizen Forces to two quotas instead of seven. On 1st July, 1925, Senior Cadet training was reduced to one quota only, while Citizen Force training was increased to three quotas. These conditions remained in force until 1st November, 1929, when the constitution of the forces on a voluntary basis was adopted. During the period last mentioned, Senior Cadet training commenced on 1st July of the year in which Senior Cadets reached the age of 17 years, and on 1st July of the following year they were allotted to the Citizen Forces, in which training continued until 30th June of the year in which they attained the age of 21 years. Notwithstanding the reduction in training, all males residing within 5 miles of a training centre were required to register during the months of January or February of the year in which they reached the age of 14 years. Junior Cadet training of boys of the ages of 12 and 13 years, which was in abeyance during the years 1922-23 and 1923-24, was also supervised by the Defence Department during the period 1st July, 1925, to 31st October, 1920.

Under the voluntary enlistment system, personnel might enlist for a first period of three years, and on its completion, the member concerned might be re-engaged for successive periods of two

or three years until he reached the age for retirement.

The Australian Cadet Corps is a voluntary organization comprised of Senior Cadet Detachments raised at educational establishments in all States of the Commonwealth. It serves as a training ground to provide, to some extent, the future officers and non-commissioned officers of the Australian Military Forces, and, as such, occupies a foremost position in the scheme of national defence. The minimum age of enrolment in school detachments is 14 years and cadets, who receive a free issue of A.M.F. pattern uniform, may remain therein until they cease to be pupils of respective educational establishments. Provision is made for the appointment of officers, warrant and non-commissioned officers on an authorized scale from within school detachments which, as a matter of general policy, are not affiliated with units of the Military Forces, but may be so affiliated in special cases. The establishment for the whole Corps is 25,000 and by March, 1946 the number of Senior Cadet Detachments had been increased to 186 with an aggregate strength of approximately 22,350.

(v) Royal Military College

This College was established in 1911 at Duntroon in the Australian Capital Territory for the purpose of providing trained officers for the permanent military forces. In January, 1931 the College was transferred to Victoria Barracks, Sydney, but it returned to Duntroon early in 1937. Further particulars respecting the College are given on p. 915 of Official Year Book No. 15.

(vi) Rifle Clubs

The Australian Rifle Club movement, which had its origin in 1888, is provided for in the Defence Act and comprises a Commonwealth Council of Rifle Associations, which functions in an advisory capacity to the Minister and in the promotion of Inter-Empire and Interstate rifle competitions, State Associations, District Unions and Clubs. Prior to 1931 the administration of the organization was the responsibility of the Secretary for Defence. From that year its control reverted to the Military Board and Rifle Clubs were affiliated as reserves to Militia Force units. They continued in this role until the outbreak of the recent war, when, owing to the urgent demands of the A.I.F. and A.M.F., supplies of ammunition were cancelled and all rifles of members were impressed, mostly on payment. In 1941, rifle clubs were placed in recess and, with the exception of annual miniature rifle competitions, remained inactive until recently. When placed in recess, the efficient strength of the rifle club movement was 1,018 clubs and 36,478 members. From available statistics, it is estimated that, of the membership mentioned, approximately 20 per cent served overseas and a further 60 per cent performed home service duties during the recent war. A resumption of rifle shooting activities has now taken place.

3. 1939-45 War

(i) General

At the outbreak of war in September, 1939, Australia possessed a partly trained militia force of 80,000 men supplemented by a small force of permanent soldiers and a Staff Corps of trained officers.

Recruitment of a special expeditionary force of volunteers, the Second Australian Imperial Force began in September, 1939. In November, 1939, the compulsory provisions of the Defence Act were put into effect and the first class of eligible men was called up for full time duty for home defence. In the South West Pacific Area the Australian Imperial Force and Citizens Military Force fought as a unified command.

The first convoy of the A.I.F. sailed from Australia in January, 1940, and commenced war training in Palestine. The original intention was that after training in the Middle East the Australians would move to the Western European Front, but the collapse of France necessitated the discarding of

this plan. A corps of three divisions (6th, 7th, and 9th) was eventually established in the Middle East while the greater part of a fourth (8th) was in Malaya. Part of the first division to sail from Australia was diverted to England but rejoined the main body in Egypt early in 1941.

Two of the three Middle East divisions returned to Australia early in 1942, and the third early in 1943, to meet the Japanese threat to Australia. The troops of the division in Malaya were mostly lost as prisoners of war upon the collapse of Singapore. Other A.I.F. units were sent to garrison Rabaul, Ambon, Timor and smaller islands off the northern coast of Australia. One force while travelling from the Middle East in 1942 was diverted to assist the Dutch in Java. Upon their return the A.I.F. divisions joined C.M.F. troops in New Guinea where the Japanese had gained a strong foothold in preparation for their drive against the Australian mainland. Thereafter the Australian forces were engaged in the South West Pacific Area.

(ii) Middle East

Late in December, 1940, after intensive training in Palestine and Egypt, the 6th Division came under command of General Wavell and relieved the 4th Indian Division between Sidi Barani and Sollum. On 3rd January, 1941, in conjunction with British ancillary units, the division attacked the Italian fortress at Bardia. Bardia fell on 5th January and with it 40,000 prisoners, 400 field guns, 130 tanks and much other booty. Retreating westwards across the desert the Italian army made its next stand at Tobruk. This fell to the Australian infantry and British tanks on 22nd January. The campaign then resolved itself into one of pursuit, and Derna, Cirene, and Barce fell in quick succession. Benghazi was surrendered to the Australians on 7th February. The Australian troops had advanced 360 miles in a little more than a month since their first action.

Because of aid having been promised to Greece, now facing invasion by the Germans, the 6th Division was withdrawn from the Western Desert and sent across the Mediterranean. Its place in the desert was taken by the 9th Division which was not, however, equipped for immediate action, being short of equipment, arms and vehicles. Greatly strengthened by the addition of German infantry, artillery and armoured units, the Axis forces heavily counter-attacked and forced the British and Australian forces to withdraw some 270 miles to Tobruk. Here the old Italian perimeter was hastily developed and manned while the Axis forces by-passed the town and isolated the garrison by cutting the Bardia road to the East. With its only communication with Egypt by sea, the garrison settled down to a siege by greatly superior forces. Continually short of water and food and harassed from the air, the Australian and British troops repulsed several heavy attacks by tanks and infantry, and maintained their resistance until relieved late in the summer of 1941.

In Greece the 6th Australian Division joined British and New Zealand forces. The Australian division and the New Zealand division became the Anzac Corps, thus reviving the association which led to the forming of the first Anzac Corps in 1915.

Only part of the 6th Division, however, had reached the front on the northern border of Greece when the Germans attacked in strength. Worn out by their long campaign against the Italians, the Greek army was quickly overwhelmed. Heavily outnumbered the force fell back to the Thermopylae Pass where the enemy was held for several days while ships were assembled for the evacuation.

On the night of 24th April the evacuation commenced and continued on the 25th, 26th and 27th, greatly hampered by the enemy's complete command of the air.

The main Allied force, after evacuating Greece, moved direct to Egypt, but a large number of troops, including several thousand Australians, was landed on Crete. The island was not prepared for a large scale attack, being short of all essentials, but the mixed British, New Zealand and Australian force was reorganized, equipped as well as possible, and disposed at strategic ports and aerodromes.

On 20th May, after a heavy air offensive, German paratroops were dropped and troop carrying gliders were released between Maleme and Canea. Fierce fighting followed. On 30th May an Australian battalion took up a holding position on a ridge over the beach at Sphakia from which the main force was evacuated to Egypt and Palestine.

In June, 1941, to forestall a possible German thrust into pro-Axis Syria, the 7th Division moved from Palestine to join British, Indian and Free French Forces in a three-pronged drive through that country.

Damascus surrendered on 21st June, after Australian troops had cut the Damascus-Beirut road, and General Dentz was granted a general armistice on 12 July, after the fall of Damour.

The last action of the Australian troops in the Middle East was fought by the 9th Division after the 6th and 7th had returned to Australia. After training in Syria, the 9th, together with the New Zealand Divisions, moved to Egypt and joined General Montgomery's Eighth Army. At this time the Axis forces had achieved considerable success by their rapid re-conquest of Cyrenaica and advance into Egypt. On 23rd October, 1942, after a series of smaller actions the Eighth Army launched an offensive which culminated on 4th November in the break through at El Alamein. This action opened the way for the advance of the Allied forces to Tunisia and the driving of the enemy out of Africa. After El Alamein the 9th Division was moved to Palestine and embarked a few weeks later for Australia.

(iii) Malaya

In Malaya troops of the 8th Australian Division first came under fire from the Japanese at Gemas, 150 miles north west of Singapore, where heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. However, the Japanese tactics of encirclement through the swamp and jungle, and by the sea in small craft, were so successful that the British-Australian force was compelled to fall back to Singapore island. The Australian battalions were given the western part of the island to defend, but their exposed position proved vulnerable to the enemy's air attacks. On the night of 8th February the Japanese attacked in strength and gained a foothold on Singapore island. The Australian troops moved further back and formed a strong perimeter which was still being held when the Command capitulated.

In an effort to stem the rapid Japanese drive westward a small body of homeward bound Middle East A.I.F. troops was diverted to Java to assist the Netherlands forces. On 28th February the Japanese landed at three different points and the garrison was overwhelmed. Organized resistance ended on 9th March, 1942.

(iv) New Guinea and Adjoining Islands

Immediately after the Japanese entered the war a small Australian force was sent to assist the Dutch in defending Timor. When the Japanese struck at Dutch Timor in the middle of February, 1942, part of this force had been transferred to Dilli, the capital of Portuguese Timor. The small garrison in Dutch Timor, although offering bitter resistance, was soon overwhelmed, but many Dutch and Australian troops managed to escape to join the Australian troops at Dilli. In the same month the Japanese invaded Portuguese Timor. Here also the garrison resisted stubbornly, but the weight of numbers told. The surviving Australian troops took to the hills and assumed their predetermined role. Out of communication with the outside world for several months, the force carried on aggressive harassing tactics against a much stronger enemy. With wireless communication restored by about the middle of April, supplies were smuggled in and wounded evacuated by submarine. Reinforcements were landed in September, but the situation became impossible and the force was withdrawn in January, 1943.

Towards the end of January, 1942, the Australian garrisons, each of one battalion in strength at Rabaul, in New Britain, and on the island of Ambon, were overwhelmed by enemy forces. A small

number of the Rabaul troops managed to make their way to hinterland and later escaped to Australia.

In preparation for the invasion of the Australian mainland, a large Japanese force landed at Lae on the north-east coast of New Guinea in March, 1942. In July, more troops were landed at Buna and Gona further to the east. From Buna the Japanese commenced a southward drive over the rugged Owen Stanley mountains towards Port Moresby. This drive was stopped in September at Eoribaiwa Ridge by a seasoned Australian brigade of Middle East veterans and marked the turning-point in the war against Japan. Pressing home their success, Australian forces beat the Japanese back to the north coast and with the assistance of United States units eliminated the enemy force at Buna, Gona and Sanananda after four months' heavy fighting.

Part of the general plan of the Japanese for the capture of Port Moresby was the seizure of the natural harbour and air base at Milne Bay. To effect this a Japanese special Naval Landing Force was put ashore under naval protection on the north-western corner of Milne Bay. Here they were opposed by two Australian infantry brigades. After several days of bitter fighting the survivors of the Japanese force evacuated by sea. This was the first defeat suffered by the enemy in their southward drive.

The next move of the Japanese in New Guinea was an overland drive from Salamaua in an attempt to capture the lightly held airfield at Wau. While the actual attack was in progress reinforcements were flown in and the Japanese force was routed. This began for the 3rd Division an arduous seven months' campaign during which the Japanese were driven back over the mountains and which culminated in the recapture of Salamaua on 11th September, 1943.

Meanwhile the 9th Division in co-operation within the United States Navy and Air Force landed east of Lae on the Huon Gulf, while the 7th Division, preceded by United States paratroops, landed at Nadzab, north-west of Lae. The two divisions converged quickly on the Japanese base and Lae fell to the 7th Division on 16th September, 1943. Part of the 9th then left the main body and moved east towards Finschhafen. The rest of the division followed and, after an opposed amphibious landing, Finschhafen fell to the Australians on 2nd October. By November, 1943, the Japanese were finally cleared from the hill country around Satelberg and Wareo and the advance was continued along the coast to Sio. Here the 5th Division took over and moved on to Saidor, to the east of which contact was made on 10th February, 1944 with a United States force which had landed at Saidor on 2nd January to cut the Japanese line of retreat.

Moving inland from Lae up the Ramu Valley the 7th Division captured the airfield at Dumpu and cleared the enemy from the Finisterre Ranges. Relieving the 7th the 11th Division pressed on through Bogadjim to capture the port of Madang on 24th April. The advance along the coast was continued by the 5th Division. Alexishafen fell on 26th April. The Division reached Hansa Bay on 12th June and the mouth of the Sepik River on 13th July, 1944.

Late in 1944 Australian troops relieved the United States garrisons at Aitape in New Guinea, at Bougainville in the Solomons, and on New Britain. In the three areas the original task of the Australians was that of a holding role but the unexpected strength of the enemy led to heavy fighting at Aitape and on Bougainville.

From Aitape the Australians moved in two forces, one east along the coast, the other over the Torricelli Mountains, in an attempt at a pincer movement to drive the Japanese back to their main base at Wewak. Hampered by the swift flowing rivers and a high rate of sickness from malaria and scrub typhus the coastal force pushed through to capture Wewak on the 11th May, 1945. As the drive advanced along the coast thousands of the enemy moved inland over the mountains and strengthened the resistance against the smaller Australian force inland. Bitter fighting was still raging at the time of the Japanese surrender.

On 23rd November, 1944, the 2nd Australian Corps took over command of the Northern Solomons from the United States forces, with head-quarters at Torokina on the island of Bougainville, and shortly afterwards commenced a three way drive to the north, to the south and across the centre. By June, 1945 the enemy to the north had been driven onto the narrow Bonis Peninsula and, although still resisting strongly, was in a hopeless position. In the centre of the island active patrolling from Pearl Ridge towards Numa Numa had achieved complete control of the cross-island routes from Torokina, while the southern advance by the 3rd Division into the Buin area had set the stage for a decisive battle. This action was progressing favourably at the time of the Japanese surrender.

Responsibility for New Britain passed from the United States to the 5th Division in November, 1944. The main body of the division was based at Jacquinot Bay on the south coast while a battalion group occupied the Cape Hoskins area on the north coast.

Moving mainly by water in a series of bounds both forces progressed northwards until by 9th April forward troops were firmly established across the neck of the Gazelle Peninsula upon which the Japanese garrison was confined.

With its main task completed the force then commenced intensive patrolling of the Peninsula to discover the enemy's strength and dispositions so that plans could be laid for a later offensive. This action was proceeding when Japan surrendered.

(v) Borneo

The final campaign fought by Australian troops in the war was an attack by two divisions on Borneo. The operation was divided into three phases. On 1st May, 1945 a brigade group of the 9th Division, assisted by a small Netherlands East Indies force, went ashore on the island of Tarakan off the east coast and by June had taken possession of the island. This action was followed on the 10th June by the landing of the rest of the division on the former British territory of North Borneo.

On 1st July the 7th Division landed in the Balikpapan region of the east coast. Enemy opposition in each case was strong but at the time of the cessation of hostilities valuable territory had been recaptured.

(vi) Women's Services

At the outbreak of war the only women's service in existence was the Australian Army Nursing Service. The first contingent of nurses proceeded to Palestine early in 1940. During the war members of the A.A.N.S. served in England, Australia, Palestine, Libya, Egypt, Greece, Eritrea, Syria, Malaya, Ceylon, Papua, New Guinea, Solomons, New Britain, and Borneo.

War Cabinet approved of the formation of an Australian Women's Army Service on 13th August, 1941, its object being to release men for employment with fighting units. Enlistment began early in January, 1942. On 15th November, 1944, War Cabinet gave approval for the posting of up to 500 volunteers to New Guinea. A draft of 15 officers and 333 other ranks took up duty at Headquarters First Army early in May, 1945.

In December 1942, the Australian Army Medical Women's Service was formed to replace Voluntary Aid Detachments on full time service. Former V.As. formed the nucleus of this Service. A.A.M.W.S. served with hospitals overseas and in a hospital ship.

(vii) Volunteer Defence Corps

The Corps was inaugurated on 15th July, 1940. It reached its maximum strength in June, 1942, when enlistments totalled 98,000. The members, a few on full time, others on part time duty, were employed as plane spotters, coast watchers, and protectors of vital industries. Early in 1943 the Corps was charged with the responsibility for the manning, on a part time duty basis, of anti-

aircraft and coast defence installations, including the close defence of fortress areas as its primary role. As a result of this policy over 100,000 full time duty A.M.F. personnel were released for duty in forward areas.

In consequence of the cessation of hostilities in August, 1945, authority for the complete disbandment of the Corps was announced.

(viii) Gross Enlistments

The number of gross enlistments as at 28th February, 1946, was as follows:

Australian Imperial Force	(a) 460,406
Citizens Military Force	224,428
Permanent Military Force	6,496
Australian Army Nursing Service	3,857
Australian Women's Army Service	23,988
Australian Army Medical Women's Service	7,917
	□
	727,152

(a) Includes direct enlistments and 200,008 transferred up to 16th February, 1946 from Citizens Military Force to Australian Imperial Force.

(ix) Casualties

Particulars of casualties will be found in § 5 following.

(x) Honours and Awards

A list of the numbers of the various awards and decorations conferred is contained in § 6.

Australian Military Forces in the 1939-45 War - Chronology

MIDDLE EAST

1939

15th December .Advance party of Australians embark for the Middle East.

1940

11th January .First Australian convoy (6th Australian Division) sails for Middle East.

1941

3rd January .Australian troops attack and penetrate Bardia defences.

5th January .Bardia falls.

22nd January .Tobruk falls.

30th January .Australians enter Derna.

6th February .Benghazi surrenders to Australians.

21st March .Australians capture Giarabub.

24th March .British and Australians commence withdrawal from area of El Agheila.

10th April .Last Australian rearguard reaches Tobruk. First engagement of Australian and German forces on Greek front.

14th April .First major Axis attack on Tobruk fails.

20th April. British and Anzac forces in Greece withdraw to Thermopylae Line.

24th April. Evacuation of Greece begins. Australians arrive in Crete.

20th May. German paratroops land in Crete.

31st May. British and Anzac forces evacuated from Sphakia.

8th June. Australians (7th Division) cross Syrian Frontier. Tyre surrenders.

21st June. Fall of Damascus. *9th July.* Damour taken after bloody fighting.

12th July. Cease fire. French resistance ceases.

1942

4th February. Australians commence embarking for Australia at Suez.

10th July. 9th Australian Division goes into action at El Alamein.

23rd October. 9th Australian Division launches first attack in the British thrust at El Alamein.

1943

1st February. 9th Australian Division sails for Australia.

MALAYA

1941

18th February. Units of the 8th Australian Division arrive in Malaya.

1942

14th January. Australian troops make first contact with Japanese forces in Malaya.

15th February. Fall of Singapore.

SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

1941

17th December. Australian and Dutch forces occupy Timor.

BORNEO

1945

1st May. Australian troops landed at Tarakan Island (N.E. Borneo).

6th May. Tarakan Town, Pamoesian oilfield and airstrip occupied.

11th May. Djoeata oilfield occupied.

10th June. Australian troops landed at Brunei Bay (N.W. Borneo), including Labuan and Muara Islands.

13th June. Australian troops capture Brunei Town.

15th June. Organized resistance ceases at Labuan Island. Muara Island reported clear of enemy.

20th June. Australian troops landed in Sarawak (N. Borneo), at Lutong.

22nd June. Organized resistance ceased on Tarakan.

22nd-23rd June. Seria (Brunei) and Miri-Lutong (Sarawak) oilfields captured.

1st July. Australian troops landed at Balikpapan (S.E. Borneo).

§ 2. Naval Defence

1. General

Information regarding naval defence systems prior to 1901 will be found in Official Year Book No.

2, p. 1084 while reference to the system of naval defence and the strength of the Naval Forces prior to the 1939-45 War appears in Official Year Book No. 32, p. 238.

2. Growth and Activities of the Royal Australian Navy during the 1939-45 War

(i) Introductory

On 2nd September, 1939, one day before the outbreak of war, the Royal Australian Navy was put at the disposal of Great Britain. Before twelve months had passed, ships and men of the R.A.N. had been in action against the enemy in the Mediterranean, Arabian and Red Seas, and the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

(ii) Naval Strength

(a) At Beginning of War. The R.A.N. began the war with a small but balanced fleet, comprising six cruisers, five destroyers, two sloops, a survey ship and a depot ship, totalling approximately 60,000 tons. Construction of another two sloops had begun. The strength in ships was further increased during 1940 and 1941 by the taking up for naval duties of various merchant ships (armed merchant cruisers, minesweepers, etc.) and by the addition of four modern "N" class destroyers made available by the Admiralty. These were later added to by one "N" and two "Q" class destroyers, and the heavy cruiser **Shropshire** which was handed over as a gift from Britain to replace the **Canberra**, lost during August, 1942, at the first Savo Island Battle, Solomon Islands.

(b) Naval Construction. An extensive naval shipbuilding programme was commenced during 1940, and although at that time the Australian shipbuilding industry was of almost negligible proportions, highly satisfactory results were achieved during the war years when the following vessels were constructed: Three Tribal Class destroyers - **Arunta, Warramunga, Bataan**, 7 Frigates (one not commissioned at end of war), and 60 Australian minesweeping vessels (corvettes), the majority of 650 tons displacement.

In addition, a floating dock of 2,000 tons, 3 oil fuel lighters of 1,200 tons, 35 fairmile motor launches of 80 tons, boom defence vessels, landing craft and other small vessels were constructed.

(c) Naval Vessels Lost. The following Australian naval vessels were lost during the war: Three cruisers, 4 destroyers, 2 sloops, 3 corvettes, 1 auxiliary minesweeper, 1 depot ship, 4 store carriers, 1 small survey vessel and 2 fairmiles.

(d) Strength at end of War. At the date (2nd September, 1945) of the formal surrender of the Japanese Empire, Australian Naval strength consisted of: Three cruisers, 9 destroyers, 3 landing ships (infantry), 1 destroyer transport, 1 destroyer escort, 2 sloops, 6 frigates, 53 corvettes (Australian built minesweepers), 3 auxiliary anti-submarine vessels, 5 auxiliary minesweepers, 10 auxiliary vessels (ammunition, victualling and store carriers), 1 fleet oiler, 3 repair ships, 9 boom defence vessels, 5 tugs, 2 cable repair ships, 7 surveying vessels, 28 fairmiles, 26 harbour defence motor launches, and 140 miscellaneous small craft.

(iii) Naval Operations

(a) 2nd September, 1939 to 6th December, 1941. When hostilities commenced, the main units, with the exception of **Perth**, were in Australian waters. *Perth* remained until March, 1940 on patrol and escort duties in the Caribbean Sea and Western Atlantic. By Christmas, 1939, the five destroyers were in the Mediterranean where the **Sydney** joined them before the entry of Italy into the war in June, 1940. From then on, right throughout the difficult days of the Naval War in the Mediterranean, the R.A.N. was strongly represented there by cruisers, destroyers and sloops. There were never between May, 1940 and December, 1941 less than one cruiser and four destroyers serving with the Mediterranean Fleet at any one time. During the months of May and

June, 1941 - the critical period of the evacuations of Greece and Crete, the Syrian campaign and the enemy investment of Tobruk in all of which operations the R.A.N. ships were actively engaged - nine units including *Perth*, seven destroyers and one sloop were in the Mediterranean. During this period the destroyer *Waterhen* and the sloop *Parramatta* were lost in action, while on the "Tobruk Ferry Run". On this run Australian destroyers inaugurated carrying supplies from Mersa Matruh and Alexandria to the besieged troops at Tobruk.

Sydney played the principal role in an outstanding action in the Mediterranean during July, 1940, when she put to flight two Italian cruisers, one of which, **Bartolomeo Colleoni**, was crippled by **Sydney's** fire, and finished off by torpedoes from R.N. destroyers **Ilex** and **Hyperion**. **Sydney** was afterwards lost in November, 1941 while in the Indian Ocean, during an engagement with the German raider **Steiermark** in which the enemy vessel was sunk.

Australia was active in the Atlantic from June, 1940 to February, 1941, and was involved in the operations off Dakar (July and September, 1940). In the second phase of that undertaking, she put out of action a Vichy French destroyer of the Fantasque Class. Before leaving Dakar, **Australia** herself was slightly damaged.

During early August, 1940, **Hobart** assumed the major role in the direction of the evacuation of British Somaliland at the port of Berbera, and carried out the final demolitions and bombardment of that port.

A year later, in the Persian Gulf, the armed merchant cruiser H.M.S. **Kanimbla**, manned by R.A.N. personnel, and the sloop **Yarra** helped to immobilize Iranian warships in the Karun River, and captured several Axis merchant ships at Bandar Shapur.

(b) 7th December, 1941 to end of War. When Japan struck with overwhelming force on 7th December, 1941, eight R.A.N. ships were in Malayan waters. Six others, including **Hobart** and **Perth**, arrived soon afterwards. From then on, until after the invasion of Java in late February, 1942, the ships were under almost constant enemy air, submarine and surface attacks as they carried out their duties of minesweeping, anti-submarine protection, patrolling and convoy escort work. The destroyer **Vampire** was on the screen of H.M. Ships **Prince of Wales** and **Repulse** when they were sunk off Malaya by torpedo bombers on 10th December, 1941; **Vampire** rescued 225 survivors. **Vampire** was later sunk by enemy aircraft during the Japanese task force raid into the Bay of Bengal in April, 1942. The sloop **Yarra** was lost while endeavouring to defend a small convoy against a Japanese force of three heavy cruisers and four destroyers. **Perth** was lost in action against numerically superior enemy forces in Sunda Strait on the night 28th February - 1st March, 1942. The remaining Australian ships were among the last to leave Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. Nearer home, the R.A.N. was active in the close defence of Australia. Troops and supplies were carried to Ambon, Dutch Timor, Papua and New Guinea. The R.A.N. was responsible for all shipping movements, the supply of convoy escorts and anti-submarine protection. Much of this work was carried out under heavy enemy air attack, and without our own air cover. **Australia** and **Hobart** were part of the Allied cruiser and destroyer Task Force which screened Port Moresby during the Coral Sea Battle in May, 1942, in which U.S. carrier aircraft smashed Japanese invasion forces and frustrated the enemy attempt on Port Moresby. This proved to be the point at which the Japanese sea borne drive on Australia was finally halted.

Throughout the period of the building up for, and the eventual mounting of, the offensive against Japan in the South West Pacific, the R.A.N. was responsible for the maintenance of essential sea communications between Australia and New Guinea. It was also responsible for the maintenance of the Australian coastal traffic which transported the vital raw materials for heavy industry. The corvettes and survey ships of the R.A.N. led the gradual encroachment of Allied power around the eastern tip of New Guinea, and made possible the successful campaigns which followed. The cruisers **Australia**, **Canberra** and **Hobart** led the Allied attack on the

Solomon Islands in August, 1942, during which **Canberra** was lost. The destroyer **Voyager** was lost during the night of 22nd September, 1942, while disembarking Army personnel and stores at a point on the Timor coast about which only meagre navigational data were available. The corvette **Armidale** was lost to enemy air attack in the Arafura Sea during December, 1942, while reinforcing Australian Army forces in Timor.

December, 1943 marked the beginning of the long series of amphibious operations which finally defeated the enemy forces in the South West Pacific. The cruisers and Tribal destroyers operating with Task Forces under the control of the Commander (United States) of Allied Naval Forces, South West Pacific, took part in practically every one of these operations, which included the landings at Arawe, Cape Gloucester, Saidor, Admiralty Islands, Hollandia, the Islands of Biak, Noemfoor, Murotai, Leyte and Luzon, and the three Borneo landings (Tarakan, Brunei and Balikpapan) of the A.I.F. R.A.N. ships of all types supported Australian Army operations in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomons areas, and R.A.N. survey ships were prominent in the preliminary work for all the operations of this period.

During the invasion of the Philippine Islands, Australian cruisers, destroyers and landing ships took part in the operations off Leyte Island in October, 1944. **Australia** suffered damage when struck by an enemy aircraft and sustained 30 fatal casualties - including her Commanding Officer - and a number of wounded. **Shropshire** and **Arunta** also took part in the Battle of Surigao Strait later in the month.

In January, 1945 Australian cruisers took part in the invasion of Luzon Island. **Australia**, which had been repaired was again damaged, this time by five enemy suicide aircraft, and extensive repairs were necessary.

Following Japan's entry into the war, the five "N" and two "Q" Class destroyers together with 13 corvettes served with various British Commands, mainly with the Mediterranean and Eastern Fleets. Some of them took part in operations such as the invasions of Madagascar and Sicily, and in the landings in North Africa; others assisted the great Russian drives by carrying out monotonous but valuable escort work in the Persian Gulf, the southern point of entry for war material destined for Russia. The destroyers took their part in fighting the convoys through to Malta, enabling that fortress to withstand the heaviest air attacks the Italians and Germans could inflict on it. It was after the crucial Malta convoy battle in June, 1942, that the destroyer **Nestor**, while returning to Alexandria, was sunk by enemy aircraft.

During the last year of the war, the "N" and "Q" destroyers and 18 corvettes (21st and 22nd Minesweeping Flotillas) were attached to the British Pacific Fleet. These ships, and the 3,000 personnel involved, were additional to the Australian warships and men serving under American operational control in the South-West Pacific area. All the ships formed part of the Task Units, British Pacific Fleet, and were engaged in the Fleet Train or on screening duties for carrier-borne operations against the Japanese mainland. After the surrender of Japan the 21st and 22nd Minesweeping Flotillas, together with 8 other corvettes, were engaged in minesweeping activities at Hong Kong and off the China Coast.

(iv) Attacks on Australian Coastal Shipping

Australian coastal shipping was not neglected by the enemy. Early in the war there occurred a series of daring attacks on passenger and cargo ships by German surface raiders which also shelled Nauru and laid minefields in our coastal waters. These raiders, the **Narvik**, **Manyo Maru** and **Tokyo Maru**, claimed their first victim, the French steamer **Notou**, en route from Newcastle to Noumea, on 12th August, 1940. Generally operating as a trio, they ranged over waters east and south of Australia for a period of slightly more than six months. They sank a total of 10 ships, including the 16,700 ton passenger-liner **Rangitane**; they also laid minefields which were responsible for the loss of four ships and damage to a fifth. After sinking five ships in the Nauru area early in December, 1940, one of the raiders heavily shelled the phosphate loading

equipment at Nauru, and the **Manyo Maru** and the **Tokyo Maru** landed 496 prisoners on Emiran Island. These survivors reached Australia by rescue ship on 1st January, 1941.

The next intrusion into the shipping lanes along the east coast of Australia occurred after the Coral Sea Battle, when Japanese naval operations south of the equator were confined to attempts to cut Allied lines of communication by submarine attacks. On the night of 31st May, 1942, Japanese midget submarines attacked shipping in Sydney Harbour, sinking the naval depot ship **Kuttabul**, a former Sydney ferry. At least three midget submarines were destroyed by Harbour defence vessels. The Sydney Harbour raid was the precursor of a submarine campaign against shipping off the east coast of Australia, and during June several vessels were attacked, one being torpedoed and sunk. Although some of these submarines were destroyed by Allied aircraft, two more attacks were recorded in August, and between January and May, 1943, eight freighters and the hospital ship **Centaur** were torpedoed off the east coast.

No further attacks were experienced until December, 1944, when early in the month an Allied merchant ship was shelled by an enemy submarine in Bass Strait, and early on Christmas morning an Allied merchant ship was sunk by a torpedo from an enemy submarine between Sydney and Melbourne.

When, owing to the Japanese submarine menace, the convoy system was instituted around the Australian coast in June, 1942, Australian escort vessels were employed to protect the convoys. As the Allied forces moved northward to New Guinea and along the northern New Guinea coast, the convoys were extended, and, by the end of the war, Australian escort vessels had afforded anti-submarine protection to vast numbers of Allied troops and quantities of Allied war materials to places as far afield as Morotai, Borneo and the Philippines.

(v) Naval Personnel

One important difference marked the R.A.N. of September, 1939, from that of August, 1914. This was that the majority of the ships were commanded by R.A.N. officers, graduates of the R.A.N. college, and, with the exception of a few officers and men of the Royal Navy on customary exchange, the ships were manned throughout by Australian officers and men who had received their training at the Naval College and Flinders Naval Depot. Later, in May 1944, Captain J. A. Collins, C.B., R.A.N., was appointed to the operational command of the R.A.N. Squadron, with the rank of Commodore First Class. This was the first time in its history that the squadron had come under the command of an officer of the R.A.N., and a graduate of the R.A.N. college.

At the outbreak of war, the strength of the R.A.N. was 5,440. This figure was doubled overnight as Reserve personnel were mobilized. Some of the Reservists went into shore establishments on base staffs, Naval Control and the examination service; others were drafted immediately to sea, a large number sailing as gunners in defensively equipped merchant ships. There was never a shortage of volunteers, and recruiting progressed steadily.

At the end of the war, there were 36,257 mobilized personnel in the R.A.N. (exclusive of W.R.A.N.S. and the R.A.N. Nursing Service).

In June, 1914, there were still approximately 500 Australians serving on loan with the Royal Navy, and, of these, more than 400 were members of the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve. These volunteers enlisted under the "Yachtsmen's Scheme" by which peace-time yachtsmen, pastoralists, professional men and business executives joined the R.A.N.V.R. for service with the Royal Navy. Those over thirty years of age were required to pass the navigation tests for the Yachtmaster's Certificate, and were granted commissions before they left Australia. The younger volunteers reached the United Kingdom as ratings, were trained in craft ranging from destroyers downwards, and then entered H.M.S. **King Alfred** training establishment to complete courses for their commissions. The first batch left for Britain in January, 1940, and the last group enlisted under the scheme sailed in February, 1942. Many distinguished themselves

while serving in every type of vessel, and carrying out every type of duty. In June, 1944, R.A.N.V.R. officers serving with the Royal Navy held the following commands:-1 destroyer, 1 frigate, 2 corvettes, 1 submarine, 1 Fleet minesweeper, and 4 flotillas of tank landing craft.

This list does not take into account the considerable number of Australians commanding individual "little ships" such as motor torpedo boats and various types of landing craft.

(vi) The Women's Royal Australian Naval Service

The W.R.A.N.S. was first formed in April, 1941, and at the end of hostilities had a strength of 2,590 members who were serving at shore establishments in every State. The W.R.A.N.S. was created so that men might be relieved for duty at sea and the shore establishments still maintained at full strength. The first W.R.A.N.S. joined as wireless telegraphists, and their success was so marked that before long others were serving as telegraphists, visional signallers, motor drivers, sick-berth attendants, dental mechanics and attendants, writers, supply assistants, cooks, stewardesses, telephonists and messengers. The W.R.A.N.S. trained their own officers, some for administrative work in connexion with the W.R.A.N.S., and others who undertook secretarial and similar appointments.

(vii) The Royal Australian Naval Nursing Service

This service was established in April, 1942, and when hostilities ceased had a membership of 60.

A total of 860 decorations and awards to R.A.N. personnel for actions in all theatres of war had been announced on the cessation of hostilities. This number included 18 awards bestowed by United States authorities, 4 Royal Netherlands and 4 Greek decorations.

(viii) Casualties

A table showing the numbers of casualties in the European and Pacific zones of operations is included in §5.

(ix) Decorations and Awards

Particulars of decorations and awards appear in §6 following.

§ 3. Air Defence

1. General

A statement respecting the preliminary steps taken in connexion with the development of air defence will be found in Official Year Book No. 18, p.610.

2. Expansion and Development of the Royal Australian Air Force during the 1939-45 War

(i) **Constitution and Expansion of Air Board.** Prior to 13th March, 1940, the Air Board consisted of the Chief of the Air-Staff, the Air Member for Personnel, the Air Member for Supply, and the Finance Member (civilian). The Secretary, Department of Air was an ex-officio member of the Air Board.

On 13th March, 1940, the Air Board was re-organized and re-constituted as follows:- the Chief of the Air Staff, the Air Member for Personnel, the Air Member for Organization and Equipment, the Director-General of Supply and Production (civilian), and the Finance Member (civilian). The Secretary, Department of Air was an ex-officio member.

On 12th December, 1940, an additional member - the Business Member - was appointed.

The expansion of the R.A.A.F. and the formation of Allied Air Head-quarters necessitated a re-organization of the Air Board consequent on the transfer to Allied Air Head-quarters of the operational functions formerly exercised by the Chief of the Air Staff. This re-organization, which was effective from 4th June, 1942 until the cessation of hostilities on 15th August, 1945, provided for the following Board members:- the Chief of the Air Staff, the Air Member for Personnel, the Air Member for Engineering and Maintenance, the Air Member for Supply and Equipment, the Finance Member (civilian), and the Business Member (civilian). The Secretary, Department of Air was an ex-officio member.

(ii) **Strength of Personnel and Units at Outbreak of War.** The strength of the R.A.A.F. at the outbreak of war (3rd September, 1939) was 310 officers and 3,179 other ranks.

There were 12 squadrons in existence of which two were formed in nucleus only, while a number of the flying personnel of No. 10 Squadron was in England taking delivery of the Sunderland flying boats with which that squadron was to be equipped.

In addition to R.A.A.F. Head-quarters, there were four R.A.A.F. stations (Laverton, Richmond, Rathmines and Pearce), one Training Depot (Laverton), two Aircraft Depots (Richmond and Laverton), one Armament Training School (Cressy) and one Flying Training School (Point Cook).

The squadrons were located at Laverton, Richmond, Rathmines and Pearce, but during the precautionary stage prior to the outbreak of war, two squadrons (Nos. 12 and 23) moved to their permanent stations at Darwin and Archerfield.

As a gesture to the British Government, No. 10 Squadron, equipped with Sunderlands, was loaned to the R.A.F. Coastal Command on the outbreak of war. This was the first R.A.A.F. squadron to see action.

(iii) **War-time Development and Expansion of Front Line Squadrons.** The approved pre-war development programme was 19 squadrons with a first-line strength of 212 aircraft with a reserve of 50 per cent. This programme was to be completed by June, 1941.

At a meeting held on 22nd September, 1939, the defence Committee endorsed a recommendation by the Air Board that the R.A.A.F. should be increased by 13 squadrons (making a total of 32) and consequent ancillary units.

War Cabinet on 2nd March, 1942 approved of a further expansion of the R.A.A.F. to 73 squadrons. Expansion in accordance with that plan was, however, retarded because of difficulties experienced in obtaining the requisite aircraft. As the result, following on decision of War Cabinet on 5th October, 1942, the planned rate of expansion of R.A.A.F. squadrons was reduced as follows:- (a) by April, 1943, to 35 squadrons; (b) by September, 1944, to 51 squadrons. The additional 16 squadrons were to be formed and maintained from local production.

That planned expansion was, however, retarded because aircraft deliveries fell below requirements and programmed deliveries.

On 2nd March, 1943, War Cabinet, taking into account revised figures of anticipated deliveries from overseas and local production, approved of the following recommendations relative to the expansion of the R.A.A.F.:- (a) expansion of the R.A.A.F. in 1943 from 30 to 45 squadrons for which aircraft should be available from local and overseas production by December, 1943; (b) essential preliminary planning to be arranged for the further development of the R.A.A.F. up to a total of 51 squadrons in 1944; (c) the establishment of such ancillary units as were required to meet the operational needs of the Allied Air Forces in the South West Pacific Area; (d) appointment and enlistment of the necessary personnel required for such expansion.

In October, 1943, a review of the nature, extent and balance of the war effort in the light of manpower position was made by War Cabinet, and the monthly allotment of manpower to the R.A.A.F. was greatly reduced.

War Cabinet decided that the Commonwealth's part in the Empire Air Training Scheme should be directly related to the contemplated strength of the R.A.A.F. in the South West Pacific area; that, in order to avoid disrupting the E.A.T.S., the outflow of personnel should be continued on a diminishing basis and that the strength of the R.A.A.F. should be stabilized at the (then) present strength in Australia (43 squadrons) plus the numbers that could be transferred from overseas, plus the strength that could be maintained from the reduced intake.

Following a review of the strength of the R.A.A.F. in October, 1943, it was estimated from the revised manpower allocation that the R.A.A.F. could be developed in 1944 to a total of 53 R.A.A.F. squadrons in Australia.

In addition to 53 R.A.A.F. squadrons in Australia, there were to be 3 R.A.F. squadrons (Spitfires) and 2 N.E.I. squadrons, as well as the two permanent squadrons of the R.A.A.F. overseas (Nos. 3 and 10) a total of 60 squadrons.

By 1st September, 1945 there were 53 R.A.A.F. squadrons in S.W.P.A., 2 R.A.A.F. squadrons overseas (Nos. 3 and 10), plus 4 R.A.F. squadrons, and 2 N.E.I. squadrons operating under R.A.A.F. Command in S.W.P.A. In addition there were 2 R.A.F. and 1 N.E.I. transport squadrons. As at the cessation of hostilities in Europe, Australia had provided 15 squadrons in that theatre under the E.A.T.S.

(iv) Administrative and Operational Control of R.A.A.F. On 30th April, 1942, operational units of the R.A.A.F. in the South West Pacific area and elements of the 5th (U.S.) Air Force were combined operationally under Lieutenant-General Geo. H. Brett, who was appointed Commanding General of the Allied Air Forces, S.W.P.A.

By agreement with the Commanding General, Allied Air Forces, and effective from 9th September, 1942, R.A.A.F. staff were withdrawn from Allied Air Head-quarters and there was established in Brisbane a R.A.A.F. Command, known as "R.A.A.F. Command, Allied Air Forces".

The function of R.A.A.F. Command was the operational control, under the Commanding General, Allied Air Forces, S.W.P.A., of such R.A.A.F. operational units and other Allied units as from time to time might be assigned to it.

On 26th February, 1944 operational control of R.A.A.F. units in Southern New Guinea (excluding Goodenough and Kiriwina) was placed under R.A.A.F. Command, instead of 5th Air Force as hitherto. This was later extended to cover Northern Areas of New Guinea, Halmaheras and Borneo.

R.A.A.F. Command did not exercise any administrative function in respect of any R.A.A.F. formation or unit, administrative control having been exercised by R.A.A.F. Head-quarters through the various Group and Area Head-quarters. Advanced echelons of R.A.A.F. Head-quarters were established as necessary to maintain administrative contact with General Head-quarters, S.W.P.A.

(v) Training of Empire Air Training Scheme Personnel. When the Empire Air Training Scheme was first visualized, it was anticipated that all advanced training would take place in Canada (after elementary training in the respective dominions) with a calculated peak output of 50,000 aircrew annually.

During the Ottawa conference of November, 1939, it was decided that Australia would fully train

7/9ths of her E.A.T.S. personnel, sending the remaining 2/9ths to Canada for advanced training. This was the basis adopted.

Rhodesia was used to relieve Australia's aircrew waiting list before the Australian training was fully under way.

The United Kingdom agreed to contribute to both the Australian and Canadian schemes certain aircraft, spares and similar supplies. The remaining costs in Australia were borne by Australia, which also contributed to the remaining costs of the Canadian scheme, first on a basis of 11.28 per cent. of the total costs and later on a fixed "per capita" charge of 7,000 dollars (&A.1,981) per Australian trainee.

The following figures include all Australians trained to 31st March, 1945 (the date of cessation of the scheme):-

	Intake	Output
Australians trained in Australia	(a) 40,089	27,387
Australians trained in Canada	10,351	9,606
Australians trained in Rhodesia	674	583

(a) Includes 8,604 wastage in Australia and 4,098 aircrew still in training at 31st March, 1945. The total Australian intake to training amounted to 51,114.

The overseas drafts were partially trained in Australia. Pilots for Canada were trained in Australia to Elementary Flying Training School stage, and all other categories (Observers, Wireless Air Gunners, etc.) were trained in Australia to Initial Training School stage.

During the training of Australian aircrew under the E.A.T.S., 316 deaths occurred due to flying accidents. Of these, 231 occurred in Australia, 65 in Canada and 23 in Rhodesia.

(vi) Peak Strength of Personnel and Strength of Units at End of War. The highest figures of personnel serving in the R.A.A.F. were reached on 29th November, 1944, when there were 20,091 R.A.A.F. officers, 144,674 airmen and 657 W.A.A.A.F. officers and 17,800 air-women - a grand total of 183,822.

Royal Australian Air Force personnel served in every theatre of war in the world with the exception of China. (Catalinas, however, carried out mine-laying operations off the China Coast).

On 1st September, 1945, there were 480 individual units in the R.A.A.F., compared with the original 22 at the outbreak of war.

3. Zones and operations

(i) European War. (a) From Outbreak of War to Fall of France. At the outbreak of war many Australians were serving with Royal Air Force Squadrons. These were the first Australians to take part in the air war against Germany. Some fought with squadrons of the Advanced Air Striking Force through the Battle of France, some with Fighter Command squadrons, and others with Bomber Command in its bombing offensive against targets in Germany and Norway. In addition to the Australians in Royal Air Force squadrons there were in England at the outbreak of war a few flying boat crews of No. 10 Squadron, R.A.A.F. preparing to take delivery of Sunderland Flying Boats and to fly them to Australia. Other crews arrived at the end of the year. In October, 1939, the Commonwealth Government offered the personnel and aircraft of this

Squadron to the United Kingdom Government for service with Coastal Command. This offer was accepted and No. 10 Squadron became the first Dominion squadron to operate against the enemy.

(b) From Fall of France to end of 1942. Following the fall of France and the entry of Italy into the war in 1940 the land battle was transferred to the Egyptian and Libyan Zone. At the request of the Air Ministry, No. 3 squadron, R.A.A.F. was sent to this theatre for army co-operation duties with the A.I.F. divisions. This squadron later became a fighter squadron.

In April, 1941, the first R.A.A.F. squadron under Article XV. of the Empire Air Training Scheme agreement (No. 452 squadron) was formed in England. It was equipped with Spitfires and fought with Fighter Command. By the end of 1941 seven more Article XV. squadrons were formed. A second Spitfire squadron, No. 457, and a night fighter squadron, No. 456, were formed to augment the resources of Fighter Command for the defence of Britain. Nos. 455 and 460 squadrons were the first R.A.A.F. squadrons to operate with Bomber Command. No. 458 squadron, equipped with Wellingtons, carried out bombing missions with Bomber Command for twelve months before being transferred to the Middle East where, during the year, two fighter squadrons, Nos. 450 and 451, had been formed.

In the United Kingdom five new R.A.A.F. squadrons were formed in 1942. The first of these, No. 461, was equipped with Sunderlands and, with No. 10 squadron, operated with Coastal Command on anti-submarine patrols. No. 455 was transferred from Bomber Command and became a Coastal Command squadron, using Hampden bombers to carry torpedoes against enemy shipping on the coast of Norway. A detachment of this squadron went in August, 1942 to Russia where it carried out convoy escort duty and mapped part of the Arctic Ice Barrier. No. 464 Squadron, armed at first with Venturas and later with Mosquitos, carried out low-level daylight attacks against important pin-point targets.

To increase Bomber Command's growing power all R.A.A.F. squadrons formed in the United Kingdom after 1942 were bomber squadrons. These included Nos. 466 and 467. In 1943 No. 462 squadron, equipped with Halifaxes, was formed in the Middle East. It took part in bombing operations in North Africa and Italy. Number 463 was equipped in the United Kingdom with Lancasters. In the Middle East, two other R.A.A.F. squadrons were added during 1942, No. 454 equipped with Baltimores and No. 450 with Hudsons. Both of these squadrons were engaged in naval co-operation work, convoy escort and sea reconnaissance.

(c) From 1943 to end of War. In 1943 and the following years R.A.A.F. squadrons operated in many theatres. In the Middle East Nos. 3 and 450 squadrons destroyed enemy aircraft, dive-bombed fortifications to clear the way for the army, and disrupted the enemy's retreat by strafing and bombing motor transport and barges. From Italy these squadrons flew across the Adriatic to assist the Yugoslav partisans by bombing and destroying enemy shipping and concentrations. No. 451 squadron followed the Eighth Army to Tunisia, then went to Corsica to give fighter cover to day bombers operating against Italy and then joined in the invasion of Southern France. No. 454 squadron, in co-operation with the Navy, escorted convoys and destroyed enemy ships and barges. Later, in Italy, as a bomber squadron, it attacked marshalling yards and enemy strong-points. Nos. 458 and 459 squadrons were also on naval co-operation duties. No. 458 moved up to Malta and on to Tunisia escorting convoys and attacking enemy shipping. No. 459 escorted convoys and carried out general reconnaissance tasks and was finally used as a bomber squadron over Italy, Greece and Crete.

In the United Kingdom, Nos. 10 and 461 Squadrons operating with Coastal Command continued their anti-submarine patrols and protected convoys bringing troops and war materials to the invasion armies assembling in Britain. No. 455, re-armed with Beaufighters, continued its attacks with torpedoes, rockets and cannon against enemy shipping in the North Sea and along the Norwegian coast. From 1943 to the end of the war R.A.A.F. Squadrons serving with Bomber

Command continued their attacks on strategic targets in Germany and the occupied countries, destroying oil plants, communication centres and power supplies. No. 464 Squadron, its Venturas having been replaced by Mosquitos, became one of the units of the Tactical Air Force on intruder operations, and eventually followed the invasion forces to the continent. In the air defence of Great Britain, Nos. 453 and 456 Squadrons, formerly Fighter Command, continued to represent the R.A.A.F. No. 453 was employed on interception and fighter cover for day bombers proceeding to and from the continent. In 1944 this Squadron, joined later by No. 451, was employed in day-bombing operations against the launching sites for the enemy's new "V" weapons while No. 456 engaged flying bombs in the air.

(d) Summary of Operations of Squadrons in United Kingdom at end of War. Squadrons which were operating in the United Kingdom at the close of the war in Europe had flown a total of 30,981,000 operational miles in 65,341 sorties against the enemy. Their record includes 35 enemy ships or submarines destroyed and 206 probably destroyed or damaged, 109 enemy aircraft destroyed and 233 probably destroyed or damaged, and 24 1/2 flying bombs shot down. R.A.A.F. bombers dropped 59,419 tons of bombs on enemy targets.

(e) Australian Aircrew in R.A.F. Squadrons. As yet no mention has been made of the service in every theatre of the War of the many thousands of Australian aircrew who were absorbed directly into R.A.F. Squadrons. During the period May, 1941 to May, 1945 approximately 60 per cent. of all Australian personnel entering R.A.F. Operational Commands served in R.A.F. Squadrons, and since for many reasons the policy for Dominion personnel to serve only in units of their respective Dominions was impossible, there were eventually very few R.A.F. Squadrons which had not had at some time or other Australian aircrew on strength.

These personnel were allocated to every Command - Coastal, Fighter, Bomber, Middle East, Army Co-operation, Transport and Flying Training Commands. In addition, a large number went to the Allied Expeditionary Air Force and the Second Tactical Air Force, and their duties covered the entire range of the manifold tasks of these forces.

Because they were so widely scattered, it is impossible to separate the weight of the effort of the Australian personnel from the vast number of men from all the Dominions who were serving under the same terms. Apart from those operating with the Middle East Command, several thousand aircrew were absorbed in this manner into R.A.F. Operational Squadrons based in England, whilst an additional 1,000 served as instructors under Flying Training Command.

(ii) War Against Japan. (a) Malaya and Operations from North-West Australia. In 1940 Australia's offer of an air contribution to the Malayan Garrison was accepted by the British Government and three squadrons were duly sent to Singapore that year, a further one being added in 1941.

Air Forces in North-Western Australia at the outbreak of war consisted of one General Purpose Squadron located at Darwin. In June, 1940, a Station Head-quarters and an additional squadron were formed and a chain of operational bases was established, providing landing strips, petrol, oil, bombs and ammunition.

In February, 1941, at a conference held at Singapore, the respective spheres of responsibility between the Far East, Netherlands East Indies and Australia were defined. It was also agreed that, in the event of war with Japan, Royal Australian Air Forces would be based in the Netherlands East Indies.

On the outbreak of war with Japan, this agreement was implemented by locating the General Reconnaissance Squadron at Ambon in Ceram, and another at Koepang in Timor. Later, as the weight of the Japanese offensive moved south, a detachment of the Timor Squadron was sent to Namlea in Boeroe to help strengthen the Ceram-Boeroe area.

In mid-January, 1942, operating from bases to the north the Japanese commenced raiding the Ceram-Boeroe group, until finally, towards the end of the month, the approach of a large enemy convoy forced the squadrons to evacuate those bases.

The squadron at Koepang continued operations against the enemy, until a landing in that area became imminent. Towards the end of February this squadron was also withdrawn to Darwin.

The first raid on Darwin occurred on the 19th February, 1942. During 1942, R.A.A.F. strength at Darwin was gradually built up and offensive operations were carried out against enemy bases within striking range. By 1943 medium bombers and long range fighters were attacking bases and installations in Timor and the Tanimbar Islands, the Kai Islands, the Aroe Islands and on the south coast of Dutch New Guinea. Heavy bombers attacked enemy ports and installations, shipping, and aerodrome installations in Ambon, Ceram, Babo-Kaimana-Monokwari, Sourabaya, Macassar and Batavia, and oil refineries at Balikpapan, Tjoe and Wonokromo. Allied bomber operations in this zone were at their maximum between June, 1943 and April, 1944. Thereafter bomber operations continued, but on a gradually descending scale of intensity as air forces were transferred to the New Guinea theatre to take part in operations to the north-west directed at the Halmaheras and later at Borneo.

In the course of North-Western Area operations allied aircraft destroyed 133 enemy ships and damaged 218. Allied aircraft also destroyed 484 enemy aircraft and probably destroyed some 90 others; 199 enemy aircraft were damaged. Allied total aircraft losses due to enemy action were 111.

(b) New Guinea. The main R.A.A.F. effort in the S.W.P.A. was in the New Guinea campaign, which began from Southern Papua and eventually extended over a wide field from Borneo in the West to the Solomons in the East.

At the outbreak of war with Japan there were two R.A.A.F. squadrons in the New Guinea Area. These were flying boat squadrons and their primary role was reconnaissance to provide an outer line of air observation. A composite squadron was soon afterwards sent to Rabaul to provide some measure of local air defence, but the squadron was overwhelmed by intense air attacks which preceded the enemy capture of Rabaul in January, 1942.

The first R.A.A.F. fighter squadron began operations at Port Moresby on 21st March, 1942. So intense was the scale of operations at this time that by 3rd May the squadron was reduced to a total of three aircraft. It had, however, succeeded in destroying 18 enemy aircraft in air combat and a further 17 in ground strafing attacks on Lae aerodrome. Its own losses were 12 pilots and 22 aircraft.

The two flying boat squadrons were withdrawn in May, 1942 to the mainland where they continued their reconnaissance to the north-east from their new base at Bowen, Queensland.

The development of an Allied Air Force base at Milne Bay was begun in June and July, 1942, and two fighter squadrons were established there as an air garrison. These, together with other R.A.A.F. elements in New Guinea, were placed under the operational command of the newly-formed No. 9 Operational Group. The two fighter squadrons, backed by support from air elements at Port Moresby and in co-operation with Australian land forces, contributed largely to the enemy's defeat at, and withdrawal from, Milne Bay.

Supply dropping from the air on a large scale was begun in November, 1942. With this assistance the land forces were able to advance down the northern slopes of the Owen Stanleys. This period marked the first use of R.A.A.F. Attack Squadrons, whose Bostons and Beaufighters began constant harassing attacks on the Japanese lines of communication over the mountains

and at their beach-heads in the Buna-Gona area.

During 1943 the Allied air strength steadily increased, enabling direct support to be given to land operations, and the opening of an air offensive against New Britain.

In April, 1943, R.A.A.F. Catalinas began the mining from the air of enemy ports throughout the South-West Pacific Area, a specialized operation which caused the loss of thousands of tons of enemy shipping and supplies, and restricted the use of many harbours. The mining was sustained throughout the remainder of the war, and the Catalinas moved eventually through the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines to the China Coast.

During the later part of 1943 it became apparent that a mobile task force was needed and in January, 1944 No. 10 Operational Group was therefore formed. The early operations of the group were confined to direct support of the Australian land forces in their drive along the Ramu Valley. During 1944 No. 10 Operational Group took part in the Hollandia, Aitape, Wakde, Biak, Noemfoor, Sansapoor, Amsterdam and Middleburg Island operations, providing fighter-cover for the land forces.

Soon after the landing of American land forces at Morotai in September, No. 10 Operational Group was transferred to the operational control of the Commanding General, 13th Air Force, and in October was renamed the 1st Tactical Air Force, R.A.A.F. It then began moving to Morotai where its role became that of destruction of enemy watercraft in the Kai Islands, around Ceram, in the Banda Islands and Macclaur Gulf.

During this period the activities of Northern Command, R.A.A.F. (formerly known as No. 9 Operational Group) were confined to the protection of shipping and the support of the Australian land operations in Wewak and New Britain, and the support in conjunction with the R.N.Z.A.F. of Australian land operations in Bougainville.

Apart from airfield construction the R.A.A.F. took no direct part in the Philippines campaign, which began in October, 1944. The R.A.A.F. Task Force was, like Northern Command, carrying out routine patrols. It did not again come into prominence until the launching of the Borneo campaign in the middle of 1945. Preparation for the operations in Borneo began as early as January, 1945. From that date until the assaults were launched, a large concentration of R.A.A.F. was steadily built up in the Morotai area. Head-quarters, R.A.A.F. Command, which hitherto had controlled R.A.A.F. operations from Brisbane, moved an advanced head-quarters to Morotai to exercise overall air operational control. The operations involved pre-assault air bombardment and general air support for the successive landings at Tarakan on 1st May, at Brunei on 10th June, and at Balikpapan on 1st July. The air forces available consisted of 1st Tactical Air Force, R.A.A.F., the 13th United States Air Force which was placed under the operational control of Head-quarters R.A.A.F. Command, and heavy bombers of North-Western Area. At this time the 1st Tactical Air Force consisted of two Attack Wings, one General Reconnaissance Bomber Wing, three Fighter Wings and an Army Co-operation Wing. This comprised a total of 26 squadrons. After the Brunei assault two R.A.A.F. Fighter Wings and an Attack Wing were established at Labuan in the Brunei zone and subsequently the Head-quarters of 1st Tactical Air Force also was established there. Balikpapan, when captured, was made the base for a heavy bomber wing and a General Reconnaissance Bomber Wing. Very little enemy air opposition was encountered throughout the Borneo operations and allied aircraft were therefore able to give the greatest possible measure of close air support to the Australian land forces.

(c) Australia, Burma and India. From the circle of operational bases established on the Australian mainland squadrons kept ceaseless watch over the important shipping lanes, co-operating with the Royal Australian Navy in protecting merchant ships and military convoys.

Although there were no Australian squadrons in name in the Burma-India theatre there were

many R.A.F. squadrons with Australian aircrew serving in them. One R.A.F. squadron with over half its aircrew Australians, having reformed in India after the Malayan campaign, attacked the Japanese in Rangoon, dropped food and equipment to troops and carried out many anti-submarine patrols. A number of R.A.F. squadrons in this theatre were commanded by Australians.

§ 4. Personnel, 1939-45 War

The figures in the table hereunder represent gross enlistments of war service personnel, plus permanent personnel at the beginning of the war, plus gross enlistments in the permanent forces. Particulars for the Navy and Air Force are as at 31st December, 1945, and for the Army as at 28th February, 1946. The term "gross enlistments" indicates that no deductions have been made because of discharges, dead, deserters, etc.

PERSONNEL, 1939-45 WAR: GROSS ENLISTMENTS, ALL SERVICES.

Service	(Thousands).		
	Males	Females	Persons
Royal Australian Navy	45.8	3.1	48.9
Australian Military Forces	691.4	35.8	727.2
Royal Australian Air Force	189.7	27.2	216.9
Total	926.9	66.1	993.0

§ 5. Casualties, 1939-45 War

The following table shows the numbers of persons killed, wounded and missing, and of prisoners-of-war escaped, recovered or repatriated in each of the services, classified according to theatre of operations:-

CASUALTIES (a) 1939-45 WAR: ALL SERVICES.

(As at 30th April, 1947.)

Particulars	Royal Australian Navy	Australian Military Forces	Royal Australian Air Force	All Services
AGAINST GERMANY				
Killed (b)	913	3,536	7,095	11,544
Missing	..	9	..	9
Prisoners-of-war escaped, recovered or repatriated	26	7,055	1,012	8,093
Wounded and injured	26	8,577	1,601	10,204
Total	965	19,177	9,708	29,850
AGAINST JAPAN				
Killed (b)	1,094	15,140	2,911	19,145
Missing	..	11	33	44
Prisoners-of-war escaped, recovered or repatriated	237	13,865	235	14,337
Wounded and injured	(c) 553	13,275	1,630	15,458
Total	1,884	42,291	4,809	48,984
ALL THEATRES OF WAR				
Killed (b)	2,007	(d) 18,676	10,006	30,689
Missing	..	20	33	53
Prisoners-of-war escaped, recovered or repatriated				

Wounded and injured	263	20,920	1,247	22,430
	(c) 579	(e)21,852	3,231	25,662
Total	2849	61,468	14,517	78,834

(a) All casualties except deaths from natural causes.

(b) Includes died of wounds, died while prisoner of war, and missing, presumed dead.

(c) Excludes Injured.

(d) Excludes 6,041 non-battle deaths.

(e) Excludes 149,439 non-battle injuries.

§ 6. Awards and Decorations, 1939-45 War

The numbers of the various awards and decorations conferred on members of each of the fighting forces for gallantry or other meritorious service during the 1939-45 War appear below:-

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS, 1939-45 WAR: ALL SERVICES

(As at 31 July, 1946)

Particulars	Royal Australian Navy	Australian Military Forces	Royal Australian Air Force	All Services
Victoria Cross (V.C.)	..	17	4	21
George Cross (G.C.)	4	..	..	4
Knight Grand Cross (GBE)	..	1	..	1
Knight Commander Order of Bath (K.C.B.)	..	2	..	2
Companion Order of Bath (C.B.)	3	16	6	25
Knight Grand Cross Order British Empire (KBE)	..	4	..	4
Companion Order of St. Michael and St. George	1	..	..	1
Commander Order of the British Empire	8	77	22	107
Officer Order of British Empire (O.B.E.)	31	170	60	261
Member Order of British Empire (M.B.E.)	42	203	79	324
Knight of Grace of Order of St. John of Jerusalem	..	3	..	3
Distinguished Service order (DSO)	19	150	80	249
Distinguished Service order, Bar	3	16	4	23
Royal Red Cross (R.R.C.)	..	16	3	19
Royal Red Cross (Associate)	..	20	4	24
Distinguished Service Cross (D.S.C.)	149	..	..	149
Distinguished Service Cross Bar	12	..	..	12
Military Cross (M.C.)	..	458	14	472
Military Cross, Bar	..	14	1	15
Distinguished Flying Cross (D.F.C.)	1	..	2,244	2,245
Distinguished Flying Cross, Bar	..	..	138	138
Air Force Cross (A.F.C.)	..	..	133	133
Albert Medal	1	..	..	1
Medal for Distintinguished Conduct in the Field (D.C.M)	..	187	2	189
Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (C.G.M.)	1	..	11	12
Distinguished Service Medal (D.S.M.)	158	..	..	158
Distinguished Service Medal, Bar.	2	..	..	2
Military Medal (M.M.)	..	890	6	896
Military Medal, Bar	..	5	..	5
Distinguished Flying Medal (D.F.M.)	..	..	408	408
Distinguished Flying Medal, Bar	..	..	2	2
Air Force Medal (A.F.M.)	..	..	16	16
George Medal (G.M.)	9	11	20	40
George Medal, Bar	3	..	..	3
British Empire Medal (B.E.M.)	35	94	52	181
Kings Commendation	..	8	..	8
Mention in Despatches	598	4,136	1,740	6474
Commander-in-Chief Cards	..	797	..	797
Commendation Cards	11	177	155	343
Foreign Awards				

	35	64	50	149
Total	1,126	7,536	5,254	13,916

Foreign awards include those of the United States of America, Russia, Greece, Poland, France, Holland, Belgium and Lebanon.

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